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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH  
LANSING

STANLEY PRUSS  
DIRECTOR

**Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs**  
Western Michigan University  
Martin Luther King Room, 1903 W. Michigan Avenue  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

**May 7, 2010**  
**Meeting Minutes No. 275**

**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Acting Chairperson Olga Hernandez-Patino called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. Chairman Garcia took over the meeting upon his arrival at 11:30a.m.

Commissioners Present: Lawrence Garcia(late), Olga Hernández-Patino, Art Luna, Gil Guzman, Art Reyes, Mike Ramírez, Leonard Savala, Benjamin Inquilla, Alicia Villarreal

Excused Absence:,Fred Feliciano, Maria Elena Rodríguez, Rick García, Michael Espinoza, Debra Ehrmann

Unexcused Absence: Arminda García

Staff Present: Marylou Mason, Victoria García

**II. Introduction of Commissioners**

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

**III. Welcoming Remarks**

Diana Hernandez, Director of Multicultural Affairs at Western Michigan University, welcomed the Commission. Ms. Martha Warfield, Dr. Dianne Henderson, Gary Miron and Katya Gallegos also welcomed the Commission during the luncheon.

**IV. Approval of Absences:**

**MOTION: Commissioner Hernandez-Patino motioned to approve the absences of Commissioner Feliciano, Ehrmann, Espinoza, Rick Garcia and Rodriguez. Commissioner Ramirez supported the motion. Motion carried.**

**V. Approval of Agenda**

**MOTION: Commissioner Luna motioned to approve the agenda of May 7, 2010. Commissioner Villarreal supported the motion. Motion carried.**

**VI. Approval of Minutes**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Luna motioned to approve the minutes of April 20 and April 21, 2010. Commissioner Reyes added one correction for the April 20<sup>th</sup> minutes – Section IX. Under Committee Reports – it should reflect to “add Commissioner Reyes to the Legislative & Civic Engagement Committee” not the Economic Development Committee. Commissioner Ramirez supported the motion. Motion carried.

## **VII. Public Forum**

**Maria Salinas, Gamaliel Foundation-Grand Rapids:** Ms. Salinas brought her supervisor, Ana Ashley Garcia, to introduce her to the Commission. She invited the Commission to a prayer vigil that they will be holding at Battle Creek Immigration Detention Center on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm. Chairman Garcia thanked Ms. Salinas for volunteering for MI Hispanic Advocacy Day.

**Ana Ashley Garcia, Gamaliel Foundation:** Ms. Garcia stated she is the Associate Director for the Gamaliel Foundation. She stated the mission of Gamaliel Foundation is to assist local community leaders to create, maintain and expand independent, grassroots, and powerful faith-based community organizations so that ordinary people can impact the political, social, economic, and environmental decisions that affect their lives; to provide these organizations with leadership training programs, consultation, research and analysis on social justice issues; to be a network for mutual learning environments and working coalitions. She stated she was very happy to meet the Commission and looks forward to meeting with them in the future.

## **VIII. Executive Reports**

### Chairperson's Report:

No report. Discussion under Old Business - *MI Hispanic Advocacy Day*.

### B. Executive Director's Report:

Director Mason entertained any questions in reference to her written report, as well as her report on her trip to Mexico with the group of Consejeros – an Advisory Council for Presidente Felipe Calderon. She stated the trip involved many long hours of work, and there were people from all over the U.S. in attendance. Ms. Mason reviewed her report with Commissioners. The resolution that the Commission presented to the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara in Guadalajara, Jalisco was very appreciative and touched that we provided this special recognition to them.

Chairman Garcia inquired into the status of SB 215. Director Mason stated that Senator Garcia is going to be sending a letter for the Speaker. Ms. Mason will also be following up with the Speaker and the Majority Leader. It is all ready to be voted on. Chairman Garcia stated that Speaker Dillon will be the speaker at the Economic Club in Detroit on May 20 that he is attending so he will mention the pending bill to him as well. Commissioner Inquilla distributed a handout on SB 215.

Chairman Garcia inquired about status of Census 2010 and the level of participation by the Hispanic community. Ms. Mason stated that thus far

Michigan has returned about 65% of the census forms. She added they will be getting a listing of those not returned so the group she is working with, Cuenta Conmigo, through the US Hispanic Leadership Institute can assist by knocking on doors and helping and encouraging individuals to complete the census forms and mail them in.

## **IX. Committee Reports:**

Economic Development: no report

Education: No report

Legislative & Civic Engagement: Commissioner Reyes stated through MI Hispanic Advocacy Day, we did a good job of building relationships with legislators and had a good presence there at the State Capitol. He stated that for next year that it would be good to add an education component to it by adding civic engagement to training and organizing the attendees. Commissioner Villarreal added that the National Council of La Raza provides training sessions and materials for planning an advocacy day event. Ms. Mason stated that a report will be prepared and sent to NCLR. Ms. Mason stated that NCLR can come and train Commissioners for next year's event.

Chairman Garcia asked Commissioner Inquilla to provide an update on the Arizona Immigration issue. Commissioner Inquilla stated to date the people have filed a lawsuit against the new law for the constitutional aspects of how it intrudes on the federal role of immigration. Supporters of the law state their position compliments the federal role instead of replacing the federal role but it clearly does not do that. Commissioner Inquilla stated that we have to be ready for it to happen here in Michigan and be ready to mobilize. He believes it is only a matter of time before it comes to Michigan.

Commissioner Villarreal agreed with Commissioner Inquilla and stated that she feels that the Commission should be proactive and perhaps provide a statement out to the community.

Chairman Garcia inquired if Commissioners felt that it was too political for the Commission to take on?

Commissioner Villarreal stated that she felt it should have an educational angle. This is a bipartisan issue and we are not taking a political stance on it but the information and education on the issue is out there so the community knows what are their rights and responsibilities.

Commissioner Ramirez agreed that the Commission needed to issue a statement. Also adding that other state Commissions have already issued a statement.

Commissioner Guzman added President Obama will be in Kalamazoo on June 10<sup>th</sup> for a high school commencement and perhaps it would be a good idea to put out a statement before that date.

Director Mason stated that if the Commission wanted to put out a position statement that she will run it by our Legislative Liaison Tom Martin and Deputy Director Ms. Susan Corbin.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Guzman moved for the Commission to prepare and submit a statement that includes “the Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs strongly disagrees with the Arizona law.” Commissioner Savala suggested adding “not supporting travel or to the economy of the state of Arizona.” Commissioner Villarreal supported the motion. Chairman Garcia stated this is a provision motion – providing that we are able to speak to Mr. Tom Martin. Motion carried.

#### **X. Old Business:**

1. Michigan Hispanic Advocacy Day – Discussion on Commissioners perceptions on how the day went and what can be improved upon for next year.

- ❖ Acting Chairman Hernandez stated she thought it was very successful for the first year. Commissioner Hernandez also thanked the office staff and the steering committee for all their work in organizing the event as well as commenting that the reception for the legislators was very nice and well organized. She heard that the legislators and State Police Director really appreciated us honoring them. She added that one of the objectives in holding this event was for COSSA and the Hispanic community to be visible and she said with all those red bags in the downtown area, we were very visible. She was asked by many citizens walking around what did the red bag signify and what were we doing. She asked Commissioners and visitors who attended to give their comments.
- ❖ Commissioner Savala stated he thought it was very informative and helpful and had a chance to meet with his State Rep. Joan Bauer. He stated he met Rep. Bauer with approximately 15 other individuals. He stated that Rep. Bauer was very receptive to them and the meeting went very well.
- ❖ Commissioner Ramirez thought that for the first time being held it was a big success. The legislators that were not available to have meetings in the morning came to the luncheon so we were able to talk to them. .
- ❖ Commissioner Reyes stated he thought it was a success and he enjoyed the presence that we had, the young students from Adrian, and that we did a very good job of having speakers and having people represent the community in honoring the Hispanic legislators that we currently have. He appreciated the Commission in giving his father the opportunity to speak at the event as he is currently running for office. He stated there are some ways to improve the event next year and that would be as Commissioner Ramirez suggested that it would be better to have the event in conjunction with Hispanic Heritage Month. He suggests exploring the possibility of combining both events.
- ❖ Commissioner Inquilla agreed that he believed the event was a success for a first time event. The Commission meeting following the event supplied good, constructive suggestions for future events. He enjoyed the opportunity to be able to walk into legislators offices and have an opportunity to talk with them or their staffers. He felt it was a rewarding day and it was good to hear the legislators’ feedback.

- ❖ Commissioner Luna stated he believed it was a good step forward. He really enjoyed talking with the students and taking them to the legislator's offices. He added that he believes this event planted a seed with the student attendees that they too can strive to run for political office and legislators are reachable to discuss their concerns.
- ❖ Director Mason stated that although the event was a lot of work, it was well worth it. The event was a great day and it was wonderful to see all the students there. She commented that she met with the speaker of the House and speaker of the Senate prior to the event and informed them of what this was all about and to assist us in getting the word out about the event and its purpose. She emphasized that we would be there to help educate them on our problems in our communities – not to demand anything of them.
- ❖ Commissioner Guzman added that he believes that this event opened the eyes of the legislators. He stated that Emily Martinez needs to be commended for facilitating and bringing all those Latino students from Adrian. It is important to start planning early for next year's event.  
**MOTION: Commissioner Savala moved to recognize Emily Martinez for her efforts in working with the Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs and for her student involvement. Commissioner Guzman supported the motion. Motion carried.**
- ❖ Chairman Garcia stated that he felt the event was a success, most Commissioners were in attendance, and he is very proud of the outcome and considers it a victory. He added there were over 300 people in attendance for the lunch. He said we accomplished what we set out to do this year and has firmly advanced the visibility of the Commission.

## **XI. New Business:**

- 1) Next meeting date and location - Traverse City, June 4, 2010 – Northern Michigan Health Services. Discussion included changing the meeting time to 6-8:00pm so the Hispanic community/migrant workers can attend our meeting. The staff will research the feasibility of changing the meeting time and availability of the hotel for accommodation:
- 2) Ms. Mason presented a draft certificate to be mailed to all organizations that sponsors MI Hispanic Advocacy Day. The Commission agreed that was a good idea and liked the certificate draft.
- 3) During the luncheon, Mr. Gary Miron and Katya Gallegos made a presentation on the Kalamazoo Promise. They stated a study had been conducted on the Promise that revealed a lack of participation by Hispanic students. The Kalamazoo Promise provides four years of post-secondary education to high school graduates. A video presentation was going to be shown but due to technical difficulties, it was not shown. Mr. Miron and Ms. Gallegos offered to send the Commission a copy of the video. Commissioners requested the video be put on the Commission website.

**Adjournment at 12:15 p.m.**

Prepared by Commission staff:



Lawrence Garcia  
Chairperson



Olga Hernandez-Patino  
Secretary

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Date

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Date